

"During a routine patrol of Lake Preston on the morning of Thursday 14 November I was proceeding south along the lake about one mile south of the causeway to Preston Beach.

I observed a very large number of Mountain Duck, on closer examination it was found that most of the birds were unable to fly. It appears as though a mass moult was being experienced by the birds.

I continued heading south and for about the next six miles I found very large "rafts" of Mountain Ducks. As far as I could tell about one-third of the birds had completed the moult, one-third were well into it and the remaining third just commencing to lose their feathers.

Further patrols have been carried out to this time to observe the birds, most of which have now departed. Only one large raft and one small one were observed at last check.

Apparently Lake Preston is used by the birds to carry out some kind of special "Moult Migration". To try and estimate the number of ducks from water level and with my limited experience was not possible, the only honest remark I can make is that there were many thousands.

I will attempt to observe this occurrence in future years to try and obtain more information. I have made enquiries amongst local people but no one seems to have any information that would help. Since the birds chose an isolated area and only remained for a relatively short time it is probable that this happens each year and has remained unobserved."

That shelducks, a group to which our Mountain Ducks belong, undergo "moult migrations" to safe bodies of secluded water is only a comparatively recently discovered phenomenon. Thus the bulk of the British-breeding population of the European Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) is now known to concentrate for moulting in the late summer on the coastal flats off the River Elbe in Germany. In Western Australia the habit first came under notice in December 1964 when the English racing driver Donald Campbell was seeking a high speed record with his hydroplane, "Blucbird", on Lake Dumbleyung. He "was seriously impeded in his efforts by the presence of hundreds of moulting Mountain Ducks which could not be scared away as they were still flightless" (Serventy & Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 4th edn., 1967: 139).

No doubt other open waters in Western Australia will be discovered to which this species resorts during its vulnerable moulting period. Dr. D. L. Serventy informs me that when investigating the new Pelican nesting colony at the sand island off the Yunderup Canals Scheme in Peel Inlet in 1974 he found several Mountain Ducks in the vicinity to be moulting. The period was between October 1 and November 5.

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### CORRECTIONS

"Birds of the Gibb Rock Area," by E. H. Sedgwick, *W. Aust. Nat.*, 13 (1), July 1974: 7-14. The following corrections are necessary:

P. 8. In the list of "Observed order of appearance of farmland species" the following dates require alteration; Australian Bustard, "March 1967" should read "May 1968". Willy Wagtail, "August 1967" should read "May 1971". Stubble Quail, "December 1968" should read "December 1967".

P. 9. Under Stubble Quail the first date should read "1967" and not "1968."

"The Breeding Burrow of the Banded Ant-eater or Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), by P. Christensen, (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 13 (2/3), March 31, 1975: 32-34. Due to an oversight no allowance was made for the reduction of the original drawings in Figs. 1 and 2 on p. 33. In Fig. 1 the scale "1 mm = 3 cm" should read "1 mm = 6 mm". In Fig. 2 the scale "1 mm = 1 cm" should read "1 mm = 1.5 cm."